



City of Seattle 2004 Families & Education Levy Evaluation and Technical Assistance Recommendations



Building Blocks for Policy Statement

1. Strategy-Based Evaluation. Evaluation of the Levy should focus on the outcome of the overall package of strategies, as a whole.

- To most effectively and efficiently use Levy, agency and program resources, a comprehensive outcome-based evaluation should be conducted at two points in the Levy cycle – mid-Levy (or three years into the Levy cycle) and six years into the Levy cycle. This evaluation, conducted across a group of selected agencies, should measure immediate, mid-term and long-term progress in each of the five Strategic Investment Areas.
- The mid-cycle evaluation will allow for strategy improvement and refinement (or course correction) to create the most effective strategies. A committee of community and agency representatives should advise the independent evaluator on appropriate outcome definitions and measures, and review draft findings and recommendations. The independent evaluator will report to City staff, the LOC or an advisory group responsible for overseeing evaluation. This feedback, when finalized, will be distributed to the community.
- The final evaluation will measure cumulative outcomes at the macro level against Levy goals and Strategic Investment Areas.
- Administrative accountability measures should be documented on an annual basis by all Levy funding recipients. These measures should determine whether funds were spent appropriately, the intended population was served, best or emerging practices were followed, etc. Each recipient of Levy funds must be willing to participate in a cross agency evaluation if selected by the independent evaluator. Any additional cost for participation would be covered by funds set aside for evaluation.
- To measure effectiveness of the Levy investment, 5% of total Levy funding should be set aside for comprehensive outcome-based evaluation and accountability measures (as well as Technical Assistance, discussed below).

2. Technical Assistance is a Valuable Tool for Strengthening Strategy Development. To be most effective in meeting Levy goals, technical assistance should be provided prior to the RFP process, during strategy implementation and the evaluation phase.

Prior to and During the RFP Process

- Meet with providers in each Strategic Investment Area and potential Levy participants to discuss best and effective, emerging practices.
- Develop the framework for the RFP and RFP Process in conjunction with potential providers.

Implementation & Evaluation Phases

- Establish a Technical Assistance Corps of independent, contracted experts in each Investment Area and respected community providers of diverse backgrounds.
- Levy should fund a bank of hours to assist agencies funded by the Levy to meet strategic goals.
- Technical assistance should also be available for implementation and evaluation.

3. Awarding Funds to Levy Providers. Funding awards should be based on best practice guidelines; effective, emerging practice; potential to meet Levy outcomes and past Levy performance.

- The majority of Levy funds should be awarded on multi-year basis to support established best practices. The balance of Levy funds should be available for innovative, emerging programs – particularly programs serving populations historically underserved or with highest risk of dropping out of school – with shorter evaluation cycles.

4. Continued Conversations with Community-Based Experts and Providers. A small group of representatives of community groups with diverse backgrounds and expertise in Strategic Investment Areas should be established to serve as stewards of the Levy resources.